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South Dakota Art Museum Newsletters and Publications

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The South Dakota Art Museum News, Spring 1997

South Dakota Art Museum

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Museum Receives *Gift*

The South Dakota Art Museum has recently been presented with seven Harvey Dunn paintings, as well as archives and artifacts relating to Dunn, from the estate of artist Horace Gilmore of Peacham, Vermont. Gilmore, who died in 1996, and his late wife Helen were both students of Harvey Dunn and artists in their own right. The Gilmore estate has also bequeathed a number of works painted by Horace and Helen Gilmore to the Museum's collection. Museum Director Lynda Clark Crabtree and volunteer Bonnie Lievan traveled to Vermont in February to sort, pack, and document the items for shipping to South Dakota. Read Lynda's commentary on the trip in her director's column "A Few Words".

Portrait of Helen Gilmore painted in 1948 by Harvey Dunn



Paintings by Helen Gilmore, student and life-long friend of Harvey Dunn



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Exhibitions Calendar

April 19, - June 1, 1997

Dan Packard: Constructions

Artist Dan Packard was reared in a seafaring family on the New England coast and he has worked as both seaman and boat builder. Landlocked now in Vermillion, South Dakota, he is a Professor of Art at the University of South Dakota. Though far from the ocean physically, Packard draws his inspiration from the sea and from the vessels that journey it. Boat building, the craft that motivates his art, pushes the use of wood to extremes, and the boat builder bears the responsibility for protecting life itself.

Through constructions predominately of wood, Packard explores the nature of "object". The use of large forms, ranging in size from two to ten feet, allows him to experiment with the structural elements and processes used to create traditional wooden boats. Although he is reluctant to label his work, the artist terms his constructions as minimalist in style. For many years, a recurring theme in Dan Packard's art has been the boat form as a "metaphor for the human condition and for the heroic journey" of life.

Paintings: From the Collection

Paintings from the collection of the South Dakota Art Museum are the focus of this display featuring works from both the representational and abstract concepts of art. Birger Sandzen's *Twilight in the Rocky Mountain National Park*, and a vivid landscape by Sioux Falls artist Milt Kudlacek are offset by the severity of the striking black and white calligraphic images produced by Ulfert Wilke for the painting, *The 14th of July, 1970*. Still life paintings by Myra Miller and Harold Weston are included in this exhibition, as well as the geometric "Termesphere" entitled *Solid Corners* by artist Dick Termes from Spearfish, South Dakota.



Dan Packard with works from "Constructions".

June 1 - Throughout Summer

Harvey Dunn: Illustrator and Teacher

After studying for two years with his mentor, Howard Pyle, Harvey Dunn began his career as an artist and was quickly successful. Dunn approached the work of illustrating magazine articles and works of fiction with vigor and dedication. On one occasion, he is said to have completed 55 illustrations in just eleven weeks.¹ Dunn's most famous magazine affiliation was *The Saturday Evening Post*, but he also produced work for *Scribner's*, *Harpers*, *Collier's Weekly*, *American Legion Monthly*, and others.

Dunn was commissioned in 1918 to illustrate combat activities during World War I, and he toured the front lines in France recording the ravages of war. After his war experiences, Harvey Dunn seemed to gravitate more towards his second calling which was that of teacher. This exhibition highlights the artist's dual careers using illustrations, publications and artifacts from the life of *Harvey Dunn: Illustrator and Teacher*.

Taming the Prairie: Pioneer Imagery in the Works of Harvey Dunn

"I prefer painting pictures of early South Dakota life to any other kind."² These are the words of artist Harvey Dunn who returned to his roots nearly every summer for twenty-five years to sketch the foundations for his famous prairie paintings, including *The Prairie Is My Garden*, *After School*, *Just a Few Drops of Rain*, and *Storm Front*, as well as many others. A chronicle of Dunn's view of life on the plains, this exhibition

¹ *The Prairie Is My Garden*, Robert F. Karolevitz, 1987, p. 33

² *The Prairie Is My Garden*, Robert F. Karolevitz, 1987, p. 61

features many of the public's best-loved images. Yoked oxen, sod huts, expansive prairie skies, and staunch pioneer spirits illustrate Harvey Dunn's experience of South Dakota and the love he had for his native land.

Karl Bodmer: Travels in the Interior of North America

Born in Riesbach, Switzerland in 1809, Karl Bodmer was hired to serve as artist for a scientific expedition led by German Prince Alexander Philip Maximilian. Bodmer's fame is based on the illustrations he created for the two-volume atlas by Maximilian called *Travels in the Interior of North America*. Through Bodmer's etchings, this exhibition maps out the path of the explorers as they traveled from Boston, Massachusetts, to Great Falls, Montana during 1832-34.

Dunn *Paintings in Nebraska*

Early in February, seven Harvey Dunn illustrations from the South Dakota Art Museum's Collection were carefully packed by Curator, Francine Marcel for their journey south to Lincoln, Nebraska. The paintings are part of *Illustrator-Artists of the American West*, an exhibition on display at The Center for Great Plains Studies housed in the Love Library at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln.

Organized by Martha Kennedy, the Center's Curator, this exhibition is on display from March 17 through May 2, 1997. It consists of over forty original artworks as well as some of the corresponding publications in which they were used. The show focuses on paintings and drawings of subjects from literature of the American West. In addition to Dunn, featured artists include Paul Goble friend and benefactor of the South Dakota Art Museum.

The Dunn paintings, including *Settlers in Canada*, *Jedediah Smith in the Badlands*, *I am the Resurrection and the Life*, *The Visit*, *Girl Driving the Oxen*, *Stan Didn't Steal No Money*, and *The Farmer* were selected because of their value as illustrations and for their outstanding images of life on the South Dakota plains.

Art Museum *Loses Valued Friend*

Over the years many have given their time and support to creating and improving the South Dakota Art Museum, but Eleanor and Duane Evenson were certainly counted among the Museum's most valued friends. Mr. Evenson passed away in October of 1983. Mrs. Evenson died at Brookview Manor in Brookings on February 24, 1997 at the age of 88.

Eleanor Kelton Evenson was born in Brookings on June 8, 1908 to John and Maud (Bushnell) Kelton. The Kelton family farmed near Henry, South Dakota until 1915 when they moved to Poynette, Wisconsin. Eleanor graduated

from Poynette High School in 1926, then returned to Brookings to attend South Dakota State College. She graduated in 1930 and earned her M.S. in 1933.

Mrs. Evenson's community involvement was outstanding. She was a founding member and president of the American Association of University Women, president of the Faculty Women's Club, founding member and president of the Brookings Hospital and Nursing Home Auxiliary. She served on the Brookings Hospital Board and as a member and president of the Brookings Library Board of Trustees.



She was both local and state president of the League of Women Voters. In addition she belonged to the Brookings Women's Club, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Keystone Study Club. As a longtime member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, she participated in the Altar Guild and in St. Paul's Guild.

During the early 70s, Eleanor Evenson helped to raise funds to build the South Dakota Art Museum by selling reproductions of Harvey Dunn's *The Prairie Is My Garden*. She was a charter member of the South Dakota Art Museum Guild and served for many years as a docent for the museum.

Mr. and Mrs. Evenson were most generous with their donations to the Museum, giving works by Gutzon Borglum, Madeline Ritz, and Ada Caldwell, as well as their own quality collection of Native American art. The Evenson's were also instrumental in bringing the extensive Seiferle Native American Collection to the Museum, as Mrs. Norma K. Seiferle was Eleanor Evenson's sister. The family tradition of interest in the museum is carried on through the Evenson's daughter and her husband, Elizabeth and Louis Williams, Jr.

Mrs. Evenson will be remembered for her commitment to the Brookings community and for her untiring work to make it a better place to live. Her hospitality and philanthropy have been beneficial to many people, organizations and causes, especially the South Dakota Art Museum.

Come A "Round" With Us

Since opening the sale of linens from Vera Way Marghab's personal collection on November 1, 1996, Gift Shop staff has been answering the query "When will the rounds be available?" Finally, we are able to answer this burning question with not only a date, but an EVENT! The South Dakota Art Museum Gift Shop announces the "Coming of the Rounds" on Friday, May 9, 1997 at 10:00 A.M. There will be no advance sales.

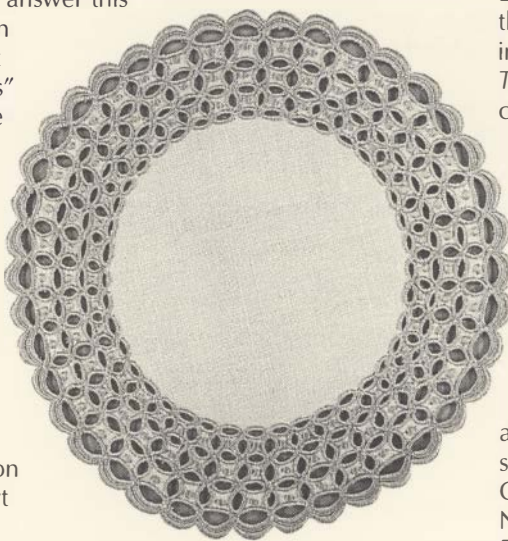
Clear your calendars, collect your friends and join us at a special reception to introduce the exquisite Marghab Linen Rounds. We invite all of our guests (18 and older) to register for prizes to be given away. The featured prize will be one of the coveted Marghab Rounds. You need not be present to win, but you must be present to register.

Textile authority Lisa Scholten and Marghab Linen Curator, Cora Sivers will be on hand to answer questions and provide expert advice and information.

Sales of more than 600 items of Marghab Linen since November 1, 1996 have raised over \$22,000 dollars for the South Dakota Art Museum Building Fund. This money, along with projected future sales, and generous donations has allowed us to move forward toward our goal of expanding the Museum and creating endowment funds. Your continued support is needed if we are to reach that goal.

Throughout the summer we will continue to offer round, men's and ladies handkerchiefs, napkins, placemats, towels and various other small items. We hope you will be able to visit the Gift Shop throughout the spring and summer to check out the selection.

Join us on Friday, May 9, for refreshments, surprises, and fun. Please show your support for the South Dakota Art Museum with your purchase of a Marghab Linen Round.



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A few Words

Museum work often involves the unexpected, just answering the telephone can lead to adventure. In 1993, I received a phone call from a gentleman named Horace Gilmore who lived in Peacham, Vermont. "Hello," he said, "I have a few Harvey Dunn paintings that I'd like to give you, if you want them. Only thing is, you can't come get them until I die, but I'm 93 so it shouldn't be long."

It turned out that Mr. Gilmore and his wife, Helen, were students of Harvey Dunn and remained friends with him until his death in 1952. Back in the early 1970s, Joe Stuart, then director of the South Dakota Art Museum, was in contact with Gilmore urging him to consider leaving some of the Harvey Dunn paintings to the museum. Mr. Gilmore was in the process of revising his will when he called to see if we still wanted the paintings. I assured Mr. Gilmore that we would love to have the paintings and that I also hoped he would continue to enjoy them for a good long while.

Last fall I was notified that Mr. Gilmore had passed away. Joan Blankenship, executor of the estate, said that Mr. Gilmore had also wanted us to have a few paintings by Helen and a few by him if we were interested. Since we collect work by Harvey Dunn's students, I thought they would make a nice addition to the collection. I asked Joan if there were letters, newspaper clippings, or other archival materials that referenced Harvey Dunn. "Oh yes," she said, "boxes and boxes." It was obvious at that point that a trip to Vermont was necessary to document the Dunn paintings in case of loss or damage in shipment, select paintings by the Gilmore's, and go through the boxes of materials. Oh well, it's all a part of the job!

When I told Bonnie Lievan, Development Officer for the SDSU Foundation, about the bequest and the boxes of historical materials, she exclaimed "Oh cool! Can I come with you to help? I'll pay my own way!" Never being one to turn down a volunteer, I immediately accepted her generous offer. Bonnie is a history buff and was anxious to dig into those boxes!

In the meantime, Francine Marcel, the museum's Exhibitions Curator, found a file of correspondence from the early 1970s between Joe Stuart and Horace Gilmore. In one of his letters, Gilmore mentioned that he had 100 feet of 16mm color film of Harvey Dunn painting "The Prairie is My Garden"! It was almost too much to hope that the film was still there and had survived intact. Dr. Norman Gambill, Head of the SDSU Visual Arts Department and an expert in film, cautioned against opening a canister of film dating from before 1952. "You see," he explained, "it might explode."

Bonnie and I made a valiant effort to get to Vermont in January, but were trapped in Sioux Falls by the seventh blizzard of the winter. We spent three days at the Ramkota Inn wondering when Joan, Bonnie, the fine arts shipper and I could all get our schedules coordinated again.

At the end of February we finally made it! In Burlington the temperature was in the mid-40s and it was raining. Unbelievable! At that point, we hadn't experienced above-freezing temperatures for four months and hadn't seen ice-free roads or sidewalks for three. I kept saying "Isn't New England supposed to have really harsh winters? This isn't so bad!" Bonnie finally said, "If you were from anywhere other than South Dakota, it might seem harsh to you, too!" Good point, Bonnie.

We met Joan Blankenship at the Town Hall, and followed her up to the Gilmore home - there are very few directional or street signs in Vermont so it's difficult to find your way if you don't know where you're going. Joan is a bright, quick-moving bundle of energy and wit. She gave us a tour of the house, showed us to the paintings and we got right to work. It seemed as though there were hundreds of paintings and, Joan was right, there were boxes and boxes of letters and exhibition announcements and newspaper clippings, etc.

I selected the paintings for our collection, took them into the living room and began measuring them, examining their condition and photographing them. Bonnie and Joan

stayed in Gilmore's studio going through the boxes and boxes, searching for Harvey Dunn materials. In our second day of work, my solitude in the living room was interrupted by shouts of glee. My coworkers burst into the room, Bonnie waving a piece of folded manila paper. On sheer instinct, she had checked through a box labeled "trash" and, upon opening the folded paper, found a small oil sketch of a man on unmounted canvas by Harvey Dunn! Thanks to Bonnie's persistence, a little treasure that no one even knew existed is now in our permanent collection.

Our final day of work was ending, still no film. There were at least a dozen reels of film, but not *the* film. I completed the list needed by the fine art shipper and drove seven winding miles to the Danville store to fax it. I came back to barely contained hysteria - Joan and Bonnie were doing one last search of cabinets in the studio when Joan, singing "Scotland the Brave" at the top of her lungs, flung open a cabinet door and there it was - *the* film!

The canister looked ok, but heeding Norman's advice, we didn't dare open it. The next morning, as we were going through the security check at the airport, I handed the film to the guard saying "This was made prior to 1952 and I would like to avoid putting it through the X-ray..." Before I could say "...and we've been advised not to open it because it could explode." She opened it! And, thank God it didn't explode!

Well, the paintings arrived in good order and will be on display as soon as they've been properly vetted. The film will go to a special lab for conservation and we'll eventually have copies of it on videotape. Another adventure that ended well with the help of fine, public-spirited people like Horace Gilmore, Joan Blankenship and Bonnie Lievan. Museums owe their existence generous folks like them!

Lynda Clark Crabtree

